

City of Corunna  
Regular Council Meeting  
Monday, December 15, 2003

Present: Corey, Johnson, Lantis, Mehigh, Runyan, Sanderson, Wagner.

Absent: None.

Guests: Joe Sawyer, City Manager; Judy Horton; Janet Washburn, Parks and Recreation Director; Merilee Lawson, Assessor/Planner; Jackie Leone, The Argus Press; Sgt. Kevin Clark, Police Department; Tim Crawford, Superintendent of Public Works; Shirley Sanderson; Pat Yott; Bob Ockerman; Chuck Hagen, Corunna Veterans of Foreign Wars; Helen Granger, The Independent; and other concerned citizens.

The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chambers by Mayor Corey at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS REGULAR MEETING: Johnson moved, Sanderson seconded to approve the previous regular meeting minutes dated December 1, 2003 as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson, Runyan, Lantis, Mehigh.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING: Wagner moved, Johnson seconded to approve the special meeting minutes dated December 10, 2003 as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson, Lantis, Wagner, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

AGENDA APPROVAL: Wagner moved, Johnson seconded to approve the agenda as presented with the addition of Item No. 7) Consider 2003 Tree Service Bids and Item No. 8) Consider Request for Approval of Absence.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Lantis, Runyan, Mehigh, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

APPROVAL OF VENDOR DISBURSEMENTS: Runyan moved, Wagner seconded to approve the vendor disbursements as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Wagner, Lantis, Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CALL TO AUDIENCE: Judy Horton thanked everyone who helped at the pancake breakfast.

Charles Hagen asked council how the Corunna VFW could get the deed for the lots in back of their building (lots 13, 11 and 9). The property dimension is 48 feet by 151 feet, which use to be a city right-of-way for the water works plant that the city and VFW jointly acquired in 1949. Mr. Hagen advised the VFW would like to add this property to the post. Mr. Sawyer explained the property Mr. Hagen was talking about was the parking lot due west of the building and not the parking lot across the street. Mr. Hagen advised when the VFW received the building in 1948, there was one active water tower and the VFW received a 10-year lease. He further advised Earl Slesseman was the person who changed the lease to a life lease. Through the years, there was a quit-claim deed done for the property, but no one realized that lots 13, 11 and 9 were not included in the deed. He also advised this issue was brought to the VFW's attention this year. Mr. Hagen stated the VFW would like to take the legal responsibility away from the City of Corunna so the VFW has full control of the property. Mayor Corey advised a request in writing including the legal description and some of the history that has been stated should be made to the city council. He asked Mr. Hagen if the VFW want to purchase the property or have the city give the property to them. Mr. Hagen stated that was why he was at the meeting. He advised the post is willing to pay for the legal transfer of the property. Mayor Corey stated if the VFW is interested in purchasing the property, then this should also be included in the request. Mr. Hagen stated the VFW has a problem with the water bill. Approximately three months ago, he contacted the city about the water bill and he has not heard a thing. Mayor Corey stated the city should deal with one issue at a time and advised again he would like to see a written request. Merilee Lawson stated she has this issue on her agenda and advised she would like to meet with Mr. Hagen to go through all of the paperwork he has. Mr. Sawyer advised the city came across this situation during the last year when the city was doing a title search of all city-owned parcels and found that the city still has the title for this piece of property. He further advised the city is also searching to see if the alley was closed. Mr. Hagen stated half of the alley has been turned into the parking lot. Mr. Sawyer stated if the alley has been closed, 10 feet of the alley would have come to the city and not to the VFW. Ms. Lawson advised the information she has seen indicates the VFW would have a life lease if the property was used to expand the VFW building. Mayor Corey stated once the issue is researched, Ms. Lawson or Mr. Sawyer would bring a recommendation to the city council. Mr. Hagen asked what the city would do about the VFW's water bill. Mr. Sawyer advised there is progress being made on this situation. The city has had a per fixture charge in place for quite some time, but the VFW has not been claiming enough fixtures so they have been underpaying the city for many years. He further advised since the bathrooms in the basement are not being used, there might be a way to take these bathrooms out of service to reduce the per fixture charge. The basement has been used for storage for the past five or six years and there is no desire or plan to use the basement. He also advised the basement could be condemned for occupancy, which would allow the fixtures to be removed from the basement. There is also an illegal sump pump hooked into the sewer system that has to be removed. Mr. Sawyer stated the city's new rate structure works very well and cured a lot of incorrect billings around town. There were multi unit complexes that were charged slightly more than a residential house. He further stated there is no system that is perfect and accommodates everyone. A residential customer with two bathrooms pays the same base charge as a customer with one

bathroom, but if a customer is not residential, then the customer is charged the per fixture charge. He also stated when it comes to smaller commercial enterprises such as the VFW, things are just out of whack. Mr. Sawyer explained the city is trying to figure out how to remove the fixtures in the basement in a manner without setting a precedent by allowing people to pull toilets out of vacant units so the person does not have to pay the sewer bill. He further explained there are some buildings downtown that have their upper floors condemned and cannot be occupied without bringing the building up to code so the city does not charge for those flushable fixtures. He also explained the rate structure could be modified to help the smaller businesses in the community by charging one base charge for every two, three or four flushable fixtures and anything over and above these fixtures would be charged for each additional flushable fixture. Mayor Corey stated if the bathrooms in the basement were removed and capped, the city could remove those flushable fixtures from the billing. Mr. Hagen stated the VFW has a residential tap. He further stated the people next door used 2,800 gallons of water and their bill was \$90 and the VFW used 2,000 gallons and the bill was \$240. Mayor Corey stated he understood this but advised the city has two rates; one for residential and one for commercial. Mr. Hagen stated if the VFW does not use any more water than a residential customer, then why is the VFW bill three times as much. Mayor Corey advised the VFW is a commercial customer and not residential. Mr. Hagen advised the VFW is not commercial because the VFW has a residential tap. Mayor Corey advised the VFW by definition is a commercial customer because no one lives in the building and the building is not being used as a single-family house. Mr. Sawyer advised the city does not have such a thing as a residential tap. Mr. Hagen advised the VFW has a three-quarter inch water line coming into the building from the road. Mr. Sawyer advised the majority of the city's commercial businesses operate on the same size water line. Mr. Hagen asked if the school has a three-quarter inch line feeding the school. Mr. Sawyer advised no, he said the majority of the commercial businesses have a three-quarter inch line but the school does not. Mr. Hagen stated that is what the VFW could not understand. The VFW thought the city council wanted to tack something on the water bill of a non-taxable organization. Mayor Corey stated the city does not have a non-profit rate structure and the VFW is a commercial customer regardless of the water tap size. He further stated the city might be able to help by adjusting the rate structure, which will help the VFW and other small commercial businesses. Mr. Hagen explained the health department inspects the VFW building for the fish fry and checks the restrooms to determine the capacity of the hall. The VFW capacity is on the borderline at 150 people and if the post wants 200 people in the building, then the VFW has to have more flushable fixtures, but if the VFW has to have more flushable fixtures, then the city is going to raise the water bill because another stool was added. He further explained it might get to the point where the fish fry will have to be stopped. The VFW has paid \$1,400 more for water this year than it did a year ago and the money being spent on the water bill comes from the money that the VFW makes during the fish fry. He also explained the extra money being spent on the water bill has hurt the functions the VFW supports in the community. Mayor Corey stated the city council is trying to work with the VFW and maybe the rate restructuring will help. Mr. Sawyer stated he has been trying to figure out how to change the rate structure to create more equity without granting exceptions.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: Mr. Sawyer reviewed his calendar and advised the POLC mediation is scheduled for January 12 at 10:00 a.m. and normally runs four to six hours. He reminded council that the city Christmas party would be held on December 20 and city hall would be open on December 24 but closed on December 26 and would be open on December 31 but closed on January 2.

CONSIDER RE-APPOINTMENT OF JONIE MITTS TO THE CORUNNA ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS: Johnson moved, Sanderson seconded to re-appoint Jonie Mitts to the Corunna Zoning Board of Appeals to serve at the pleasure of the council for a term to begin upon the taking of the oath of office and continuing indefinitely.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Mehigh, Lantis, Runyan, Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER WAIVING ROAD AND TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS ON OAK STREET FROM SHIAWASSEE STREET TO CARY STREET AND ON CARY STREET FROM OAK STREET TO FERRY STREET FOR CORUNNA PUBLIC SCHOOL BUSES FROM JANUARY 1, 2004 UNTIL THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR: Mayor Corey stated Councilperson Runyan brought this to his attention because with the bridge being out, the city wanted to do what it could to help bus the students who live on the north side of the bridge to school. The elementary students are currently being bussed but the middle school and high school students are not. Mayor Corey further stated the school was already working on a plan but needed a place to turn the busses around. He spoke to Mr. Sawyer and Mr. Crawford and everyone thought this would be the best route for the busses to use. Mayor Corey advised he suggested the route to John Smith and he and the bus superintendent drove the route and approved it. Mr. Sawyer advised Ferry Street is a major street so there are no weight restrictions, but Cary Street and Oak Street are local streets so the city would be waiving the weight restrictions for school busses only. He further advised the city is evaluating these two streets to see if parking restrictions are also needed. Mehigh moved, Lantis seconded to approve waiving the road and traffic restrictions on Oak Street from Shiawassee Street to Cary Street and on Cary Street from Oak Street to Ferry Street for Corunna Public Schools busses from January 1, 2004 until the end of the school year.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner, Mehigh, Runyan, Lantis.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER RE-APPOINTMENT OF JIM LOCKWOOD TO THE CORUNNA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND BOARD: Lantis moved, Johnson seconded to re-appoint Jim Lockwood to the Corunna Economic Development Fund Board to serve at the pleasure of the council for a term to begin upon the taking of the oath of office and continuing until December 31, 2006.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson, Runyan, Lantis, Mehigh.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL FROM NEQUIST & SON'S ELECTRIC FOR ELECTRICAL WORK TO ALLOW FOR EMERGENCY POWER SUPPLY TO SEWER LIFT STATIONS:

Mr. Sawyer explained the city has three sewer lift stations, which are not equipped with emergency power backup. When the city had an extended power outage last year, the city found out that the emergency generators could not be used because there were no connections and the voltage was wrong. He further explained it appears the city has never had any backup contingencies for the lift stations, and if the lift stations do not work, sewer backups could happen. Councilperson Johnson asked if the generators the fire department have would be compatible if another generator was needed. Mr. Crawford advised the generator would have to be a three-phase generator. Councilperson Lantis asked if this was the only bid the city had. Mr. Sawyer advised yes and Mr. Nequist has done all of the work on the lift stations in the past so the city has always worked with him because of the sensitive nature of the electronics. Wagner moved, Sanderson seconded to approve the lift station electrical modifications proposal from Nequist & Son's Electric in the amount of \$4,728 to be paid for from Sewer Fund Contractual Services line item #590-548-818.000.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Lantis, Runyan, Mehigh, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER RESIGNATION OF THOMAS PETERSON FROM THE CORUNNA

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY: Johnson moved, Wagner seconded to accept the resignation of Thomas Peterson from the Corunna Downtown Development Authority effective December 31, 2003 with regret.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Wagner, Lantis, Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER PROPOSAL FOR DOOR INSTALLATION ON OLMSTED PUBLIC LIBRARY

COMPLEX: Mr. Sawyer explained the library would like the door to look like an entry door and not a back door. Councilperson Sanderson asked if the door was the one on the Corunna Avenue side of the building. Mr. Sawyer advised yes. Wagner moved, Johnson seconded to approve the entry door proposal for the Olmsted Public Library Complex in the amount of \$1,950 with Hodge Glass Service to be paid for from Municipal Building Fund Contractual Services line item #207-266-818.000.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson, Lantis, Wagner, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER 2003 TREE SERVICES BIDS: Mr. Sawyer advised the city received five bids this year and the bid from Bill Robinson Tree Service came in lower than anyone else and they do an excellent job. He further advised the city has \$3,000 budgeted for tree removal as well as tree additions. The bid amount is nearly \$1,300 above the budgeted line item within the public works department but he felt the whole list should be brought

to council so council can decide to get rid of the trees that are dead and creating a public safety issue. He also advised if council approves the whole list as presented, a budget amendment might need to be made later in the year. Mehigh moved, Sanderson seconded to award the 2003 tree service bid to Bill Robinson Tree Service in the amount of \$4,245 to be paid for from the Public Works Right-Of-Way Maintenance line item #101-441-808.000. Mayor Corey asked if the money the city receives from the utility line could be used for trees. Ms. Lawson advised she was told the money should not be taken directly out of the Metro Act money. Mr. Sawyer advised only Act 51 eligible expenses could be taken out of the Metro Act money, which is basically street work.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Mehigh, Lantis, Runyan, Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF ABSENCE: Mayor Corey stated he will be gone for 60 days and per the charter, he needs permission from the council to be gone for that time period. He further stated Councilperson Runyan will be available during that time and he plans to be in contact with the city on a regular basis either through email or telephone. Johnson moved, Mehigh seconded to approve the excused absences of the mayor for 60 days and specifically excused from the regular city council meetings on 02-03-04, 02-17-04, 03-01-04 and 03-15-04.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner, Mehigh, Runyan, Lantis.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: Councilperson Mehigh advised he talked to Judy Horton and she would like the council to help remove all of the decorations that were put on the wagon. Councilperson Mehigh advised Wednesday would work for him. Mayor Corey asked what time of the day Ms. Horton was looking at. Ms. Horton advised around 1 p.m. Mayor Corey stated council would try to be at the commercial building on Wednesday at 1 p.m.

Councilperson Lantis advised she would not be at the Committee of the Whole meeting next week. She further advised she has been reading through the charter and read that after a certain monetary amount there has to be at least three bids. Mr. Sawyer advised the charter exempts construction items. Councilperson Lantis stated she thought it would still look better for public relations if the city could get more bids for these types of projects. Mayor Corey stated there might be some justification in using one person if that person's bid is within reason, but he understood what Councilperson Lantis was saying. Mr. Sawyer advised the city tries hard to spread work around, and the city works hard in getting bids for a proposal, but the charter gives the city a lot of leniency when it comes to construction projects.

Mayor Corey stated he sent out a memo to the city and fire department employees that council has in their packets reminding them to give blood on New Year's Eve Day. He encouraged everyone to give blood because this is an important time of the year to give blood. He further stated he plans to acknowledge the volunteers at the Christmas party by introducing the chairman and each member of a board or commission.

Mr. Sawyer advised the next district library meeting is Wednesday and the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposed district library agreement.

ADJOURN: Wagner moved, Johnson seconded to adjourn.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson, Runyan, Lantis, Mehig.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED Time was 8:03 p.m.

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STEVE COREY, MAYOR

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YVONNE F. LONG, CITY CLERK